****Rottnest Voluntary Guides Association Inc.****

**A Mysterious Disappearance**

One of the most baffling disappearances from Rottnest occurred early in the spring of 1941.

Lt. Colonel Herman August Kuring in charge of the military establishment at Rottnest was a well-liked and respected officer with a proud military heritage.

In Victoria in 1914 he enlisted in the Imperial Military Forces and his discipline and skill as an infantryman soon saw him rise through the ranks to Sergeant.

Meritorious service at Gallipoli and in France soon saw him promoted to Lieutenant. His discipline, leadership, coolness in action and excellent strategic skills were noted. He was wounded three times and twice recommended for awards, which were never granted. Perhaps his German ancestry was the reason?

After the war, he moved to Western Australia, joining the family business and becoming a master baker.

The outbreak of WW2 saw him enlist again, given the rank of Major and posted to 10th Garrison on Rottnest. Herman was a strong swimmer but was forced to walk with a cane. Sightings of him limping around the clifftops at Rottnest in his heavy greatcoat were common.

In February, now promoted to Lt. Colonel he took over as Commandant of the garrison on Rottnest.

On the 3rd of September 1941 he set off with his batman to investigate possible enemy landing sites near the West End. He was dropped at Wilson Bay and told his driver that he should wait for him at Narrow Neck. He was never seen again. Conditions were atrocious, he was wearing his heavy greatcoat and army boots and walking with difficulty with his cane having been in bed with the flu a few days previously. When he did not meet his driver a search party was raised. They found his cap floating at Wilson Bay. An extensive search including blasting the reef yielded no sign of him. It was assumed that he had lost his footing, fallen into the sea and, hampered by his heavy clothing, been unable to swim to safety. But why was his body never found despite the fact that they threw logs into the water to determine to where his body may have drifted?

This is one of the many mysteries of Rottnest Island.